

Species

Occurrence of *Drypetes sepiaria* (Putranjivaceae) in North India

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ABSTRACT

Drypetes sepiaria (Wight & Arn.) Pax. & Hoffm., a Putranjivaceous small tree species is reported for the first time for North India from Saharanpur Botanical Garden (Presently, Horticultural Experiment and Training Centre, Saharanpur). A brief description and illustration of the species are provided herewith for easy identification.

Key words: *Drypetes*, Saharanpur, North India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Geographically, the Saharanpur Botanic Garden is situated in 29.964° N and 77.546° E. and between the altitudes of 260-268 m above the mean sea level. It has a monsoon influenced sub-tropical climate because of the proximity of the Himalayan region across this Northern district. It is sub-humid regions especially the Upper Ganga plain areas. It records an average temperarure around 23.3°C during the course of the year. June is the hottest recorded month while January is the coldest one. Humidity is more in the western area as compared to the eastern region of Saharanpur. Authors collected specimen from Botanical Garden and identified with the help of critical examination of DD, BSD Dehradun & with relevant literature (Edinburg, 1883; Hooker, f., 1887; Brandis, 1909; Engler, 1922; Gamble, 1925; Singh, 2000; Sunil & Sivadasan, 2009; Balakrishnan & Chakrabarty, 2007). *Drypetes sepiaria* is a small to medium sized tree, up to 10m tall and a stem which of 20cm in diameter. The tree is flanged at the butt and lower



Figure 1a

Male and Female flower



Figure 1b

Mature Fruit



Figure 1c

Dried fruit and seed with a groove on one side

part of the trunk. Grey or brown bark, often with scales of bark which fall, leaving shallow depressions. It is described here with illustration to facilitate its easy identification.

Drypetes sepiaria (Wight & Arn.) Pax. & Hoffm., in Engl., Pflanzenr. Euphor.- Phyllanthoid.- Phyllanth. 271. 1922; *Hemicyclea sepiaria* Wight & Arn., Edinb. New Phil. J. 14: 297, 1833; Hooker f., Fl. Brit. India 5:337,1887; Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 1299 (909). 1925; Balakrishnan & Chakrabarty, Euphorbiaceae in India, (333) 2007; Sunil & Sivadasan Fl. Alappuzha Dist. 627. 2009.

Evergreen small to medium sized monoecious tree, up to 10m high, bark grey or brown, scaly, leaving shallow depressions, resulted in a mottled appearance, similar to tulipwood. Small branches smooth, slender, grey in colour, dotted with many lenticels. Leaves simple, alternate, stiffly coriaceous; stipules small, caduceus; leaf stalk 3-8 mm long, stout, puberulent; lamina broadly elliptical, ovate to ovate-oblong in shape, 4-9 cm long, 1-5 cm wide, obtuse or retuse at apex, minor nerves bullately impressed above, margin entire; base rounded or cordate, lateral nerves 4-8 pairs, slender, pinnate, obscure, ascending, intercostae reticulate, obscure. Flowers unisexual, yellowish, in axillary clusters; male flowers long, not crowded; pedicel 4-7 mm long, pubescent; tepals 4, 3-4X2.5X3.5 mm, small, concave, ciliate, obtuse, imbricate; stamens 6-10; filaments 2 mm long, free; anthers oblong; disc present, disciform or shortly copular; female flowers crowded, pedicel 1-10 mm long, pubescent; tepals 4, disc annular, crenate; ovary ovoid, 1-1.5 mm across, 1- locular, ovules 2; style stigmaform, not dilated; stigma broad, copular, peltate, fimbriate. Fruit a drupe, 12-20 mm long, 8 mm across, globose, glabrous, red, moist yellow inside, epicarp crinkled; seed 1, arillate, 10-13 mm long, oval in shape with a groove on one side (Figure 1 a, b & c).

Flowering & Fruiting: February- March, sometimes throughout the year.

Distribution: In India, it is reported only from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Outside India it is reported from Sri Lanka.

Specimens examined: South India Madras (Cuddapah District, Doent Pawlsalird, 304 m, Feb, 1887, J. S Gamble 11241; Thalingi, S. Coim bore, 548 m, 17.5. 1912, C.E.C. Fisher, 6611.

Ecological notes and Critical Suggestions: This taxon co-exists in botanical garden, Saharanpur near the plantation of *Sweitenia mahagoni*, *Psidium guajava* and *Litsea suberosa* etc. It is more or less similar to *Drypetes deplanchei*, a tree of eastern and northern Australia in its foliage, wood, bark of stem, red colour of mature fruit and a groove on one side of seed. This taxon is native of south western India. Here seed germination and hence seedlings were not reported in this species. To add this species in the northern flora, there is need cultivation, propagation & growing many seedlings through vegetative propagation is needed. Attempts must be made for the conservation of this species in this area so that it may be added in the flora of this region to maintain biodiversity. This study on this taxon is untouched in this area. So taxonomical attention, goals and principles of making biodiversity data of this taxon in north India must be open and universal.

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